



Resilience: The Ability to Withstand Adversity and to Recover Quickly from Difficulties

Sophie Hughes, Head of the Family Team, reflects back on the surprising positives of the pandemic and the importance of Resolution.

It is hard, as Head of the Family Team, to think back to what life was like ‘BC’ (‘Before Coronavirus’). I had not long returned from a skiing holiday in France; visiting my younger son who was working out in the French Alps for the season. It all started with a call in the early hours of Sunday morning, 15 March 2020. He called to say that they were having to pack up and leave the resort that day to get to Switzerland before the border closed and had to wait for a flight home several days later from Geneva Airport. What had seemed a distant prospect (after all, weren’t we an island and hadn’t we survived SARS and Bird Flu?) now became a reality.

Fee earners in the firm already had laptops and we had, as a firm, just invested in ‘follow me’ printing with sophisticated scanners and VoIP Telecoms system, but we took the immediate decision that Monday to order laptops for all

staff and started daily ‘Cobra’ meetings. We introduced immediately a rota system which meant that teams worked effectively in two shifts, so if there was an outbreak amongst one team, hopefully the other team would be able to continue to work.

As Partners (now Directors), all our meetings became virtual. All staff were told to download the VoIP app. Unfortunately, we weren’t paper-light, or even paperless – and still aren’t, but boxes in hand we decamped to our various homes to see what the future would hold. So, by the time Boris Johnson made his announcement on 23 March 2020, we were already at home. We waited for the impending storm.

What we hadn’t envisaged, but reflecting back perhaps unsurprisingly, was the additional stresses and strains on our clients and the wider population on their personal relationships. Initially we took the decision to furlough some support staff in the Family Team, expecting work to fall away quickly. Far from it, the team was, and still remains, exceedingly busy with increased instructions. But that too has had its challenges. We found that the expectations of clients were greater.